

**Date:** April 12, 2019

**Author:** Bruce Fetzer

**Category:** Trustee Memo



## INTRODUCTION

This essay covers perspectives about John E. Fetzer, in the context of my relationship to him. It is intended for future trustees and historians. The strongest evidence about John Fetzer's vision and priorities is supported by his writings, speeches and life. But his vision only comes alive and makes itself known, when experienced at the Spiritual level. John Fetzer awakened to the awesome power of the *experience* of the Spiritual call. Therefore, I suggest that the reader go beyond this writing, or the writings of anyone else, including future leaders, and especially beyond the limitations of the mind and ego, to connect to that same inner call. In the words of John Fetzer...

Over a period, if a greater liberation, to find balance is to manifest upon this planet, this freedom must first manifest. The liberation on the individual level only manifests when one cries out for freedom. Free me of these bonds, of these chains. Free me of these pains, these anguishes, free me and bring me into that place of loving. When one calls out in such a way, the consciousness of liberation is stirred within, as well as without, and liberation becomes reality. This is how the liberating action begin, to free one of the downward turn in a spiral of consciousness, and brings one up into the higher focus, back into your higher self. It is here you will find the answers to the final definition of the Foundation's purpose, in accordance with the agenda we have put it place. JEF Founders Statement 8/29/89

## I IMPRESSIONS OF JOHN E. FETZER

### Values

John Fetzer didn't articulate a list of values but had clear and consistent behavior that made his values transparent. I experienced John Fetzer's values to be honesty, loyalty, and hard work. In honesty, he stood by his word, upheld the highest integrity by doing the right thing, served the common good, instead of what was in his personal interest. He stood by people who were loyal to him. The average tenure of employees at Fetzer Broadcasting far exceeded industry standards. He modelled hard work and excellence stating, "in my day, mine was the 14-hour day". He expected it from his top people.

## Interests

John Fetzer's worldview centered around his belief that Spirit was real, and that the material universe was an energetic form of Spirit. He conducted a lifelong search to have a mystical, conscious connection to what he called the "Central Sun" (See his essay "America's Agony"). He simultaneously funded science and sharpened his spiritual practice. He consistently followed the theme connected to the survival of consciousness, connection of all things, and the power of love as a transformational connecting energy.

In the laboratory, unbiased truth can be pursued. The fact that this may be classified as nothing more than ancient alchemy need not be a deterrent. We need to bring this mythology into the level of modern science. I believe, now, the timing is right – for proof to be made and brought into the world. And it will be those few that will come together and will work together that are willing to take the risk and the ridicule to bring about this endeavor into the fulfillment so that others might see it and experience it and manifest it more fully into the world, as well. John E. Fetzer 10/4/89 "Thoughts on Research"

John Fetzer integrated his search for mystical, conscious connection to the Source through inner work, study and service. The range and depth of his spiritual search has been catalogued in the biography "In Search of the New Age". During the final ten years of his life, he practiced Surat Shabd Yoga two hours per day and read spiritual material at least an additional two hours per day.

It's my hope that all of us identified with this endeavor will seriously consider what it means to go through self-examination to the extent of seeking soul awareness because if you can't find your way on this great learning planet, it's a tragedy. It's a real tragedy. John E. Fetzer memo to Institute board of trustees 3/3/89

## Vision

John Fetzer was a visionary, pioneer and entrepreneur. He used his keen gift of intuition to help him to develop industries, coalitions and practices that created sustainable competitive business advantages. He was also an avid spiritual seeker who fully integrated his search into his business ethics and practices. He dedicated his fortune to help catalyze a global transformation towards spiritual awakening. He knew the transformational power of science and kept abreast of discovery at the frontiers of science as well as in the esoteric (unseen world), and mystical (spiritual dimension) frontiers.

John Fetzer aspired to have the world become spiritually awake in the coming millennia. This awakening could begin with individuals who have integrated inner work, study and service, to reveal their spiritual reality, by becoming free of the illusion of separation that masks our true

self. Spiritual awakening usually includes a connection within self, between all of matter and to the divine essence that permeates the universe. Awakened individuals in community could help to shepherd in the transformational power of Unconditional Love.

John Fetzer established the John E. Fetzer Institute and the John E. Fetzer Memorial Trust as a response to a call from Spirit, that Unconditional Love is our highest aspiration. As a spiritual monist, he believed in the reality of Spirit, oneness, the interconnectedness of all things. His search incorporated evidence, reason, and intuition. He consecrated a continuous journey integrating science and spirituality to help advance understanding of the nature of reality. It entails an ever-generative inquiry into the mystery of existence leading to a meaningful future synthesis of science and spirituality. The cosmology of spiritual monism understands energy and matter as part of spirit. John Fetzer's keen insight makes possible a new science of spirit and of the foundations of reality.

"Our Foundation should continue to carry forward the precise purpose that we have always indicated, and that is to be primarily a research organization." John E. Fetzer Institute Status Dictation 6-28-88

John Fetzer was practical and understood the power of science to discern truth and innovate. He didn't advocate for rigid creeds. Additionally, he prioritized science for several reasons. Firstly, it was used to test and discard beliefs and practices that inhibit the evolution of consciousness. Secondly, he was a mass communicator and understood the power that new discovery could attract attention by creating publicity and credibility. Science then, was to be one of the important tools to help catalyze the intended global awaking.

I feel that we are on the threshold of a new order where people will be seeking enlightened change. ... ***This will all come about with the infusion of spirituality into science. The Foundation's eventual intent is to integrate the scientific process with spiritual mindedness*** ... A fundamental key to all this is to conduct this search with a proper line of scientific investigation.

John E. Fetzer New Frontier Magazine, "May the Force Be With You", 10-89

A vision is defined as what would happen if the mission were to be accomplished. The mission is what gets done to advance the vision. We can surmise from John Fetzer's writings and lifestyle that he had a 500-year vision for the planet to be transformed by loving action. A generalized mission would work at different aspects of helping the greatest number of people to "wake up". Over that same 500-year span, there could be successive missions, each of which intended to move in the direction of the vision.

“...We think this is one of the early pioneer steps that will generate a new kind of world or happening 200-500 years down the line....” John Fetzer, Meeting with administration building architects, 1/8/85

## II PERSONAL JOURNEY IN RELATIONSHIP TO JOHN E. FETZER

My own story holds testament to the premium that John Fetzer placed on making sure that all senior leaders had a vibrant inner life.

John Fetzer profoundly impacted my worldview through a very intense internship. I would typically spend most of Sunday in addition to Monday evenings (from 1982-1985, then weekly until 1990) with him, amounting to thousands of hours in the final decade of his life. The conversation invariably included books he was studying, and a discussion about his dreams and practice.

As a chemical engineer and mathematician, reality consisted of rules that could be modelled and optimized. I came up to Kalamazoo as a former southern Baptist, whose belief was that the bible represented truth in its entirety. Logic and dogma provided strong arguments. Science and religion had their separate domains, which worked professionally and socially. I pretty much thought that I had life figured out until I met John Fetzer.

As John exposed me to more and more anomalies, my understanding of reality became upended. How could John dowse so precisely? How did his mystics perceive my thoughts and read auras? How did palmists share deep secrets about me (in front of a crowd)? Why are psychic phenomena so hard to replicate in the lab? And how are psychic abilities different than spiritual experience? My transformation happened when I too learned to do some of these things and had the experience for myself. That started a deeper search inside, into the more subtle, mystical experiences of awareness. Experience had a transformational impact on reshaping my worldview. All of these types of experiences lent themselves to lengthy discussions with John Fetzer.

Since then, I have had countless “coincidences”; when I was calling someone during the same time that they were calling me or dreaming of an event the night before it happened or knowing what someone else is feeling in another location. It goes way beyond empathy or compassion. When I truly love another, there is complete alignment, independent of distance. What theory explains that? What inner work predisposes more of that? How do I empirically refine my practice? My understanding accelerated when I started inquiring into the interconnectedness between science and spirituality.

John Fetzer’s greeting to me was, “How’s your spirituality coming?” His legacy inspires the kind of inquiry that could inspire millions of people to deepen their own search.

### III MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT JOHN E. FETZER

These generalizations are not a commentary on current circumstances, but a reflection on my forty-year-service, as it might apply towards the next five hundred years. Others might also offer cautionary advice on what to watch for, to help course correct back to the vision.

1. John Fetzer never became dogmatic, and continually moved forward in response to new experiences, knowledge and opportunities. Therefore, while his vision can serve to guide the direction, he would have continued to innovate.
2. His basic priorities of the pursuit of truth through science and conscious mystical awakening to Spirit were one in the same to him. In fact, he advocated for the integration of science and spirituality. John was completely non-dual.

Humanity must transform its attitudes and actions. The Foundation's eventual intent is to integrate the scientific process with spiritual mindedness. We must recognize that both viewpoints have the right to exist where there is a mutuality of purpose.

John E. Fetzer, Global Conference Closing Remarks 6-18-88

3. Some claim that John was religious. While he belonged to the Presbyterian Church, he didn't attend in the years I knew him. In the 1980s we attended Unity Church a couple of times in Tucson incognito. He explained to me multiple times, that Inner Light Ministries was the only church that he belonged to. (ILM was founded by his spiritual advisor, Jim Gordon, and served the call to help people wake up, as well.) I believe that fundamentalism (as the conviction that there is only *one* right way), in any of its forms, could impede John's vision.

I am not addicted to church activity... John E. Fetzer "This I Believe" 4/10/67

The table below delineates some of the distinctions between an awareness-based, mystical path suggested by John Fetzer's vision and a mind-based fundamentalist interpretation of the vision. The first three principles point to the nature of reality sought by John Fetzer's vision. The final three practices contrast possible approaches that are consistent with the vision. For example, in a mystical context, programs would seek to create the environment for participants to connect deeper within, activate intuition, and center in sacred reality. In contrast, a fundamentalist approach would exert a self-proclaimed "moral authority" to instruct participants in the "correct thinking" or might focus narrowly on inviting participants that have a bias towards "correct thinking".

Mysticism		Fundamentalism
	Principles	
Universalism = oneness	vs	Theism – God is separate
Awareness = connection	vs	Doctrine = rules/rites
Discernment = contrast	vs	Judgement of good/evil
	Practices	
Inquiry = search	vs	Instruction from moral authority
Integration	vs	Rationalization
Science to discover truth	vs	Science to prove beliefs

We can't know the future and shouldn't predispose the outcome. Therefore, approaches that create true freedom, are more likely to spawn the innovation that John Fetzer dreamed about.

4. John Fetzer was clear and specific about his vision. His dual interests included the integration of science and spirituality and for individual spiritual awakening. John Fetzer's life story and writings provide clear evidence about his vision and priorities. The reader is encouraged to review those materials and judge for themselves.
5. The foundation's purpose resides in the mystical realms. Community is important to sustain Spirit's inspiration, but is not the source of knowing. In the Final Principles section of the Founder's Statement, John Fetzer directs the reader to find the Institute's purpose in the High Self, *not the mind*. Said otherwise, connecting to and understanding Spirit's call is beyond the secular, beyond the mind and ego.

This is how the liberating action begins, to free one of the downward turn in a spiral of consciousness, and brings one up into the higher focus, *back into your higher self. It is here you will find the answers to the final definition of the Foundation's purpose*, in accordance with the agenda we have put it place.

JEF Founders Statement 8/29/89

6. Communities tend to default to the least common denominator. Therefore, a higher standard of individual and collective practice and presence should be expected of board members and executives than staff or consultants.

One of the big challenges is our employees and colleagues. How do you take all these people who are on various paths and at various stages of life, and pull them together with a common goal and a common spiritual understanding? And do it in such a way that we aren't offensive to their own personal belief system? We can't neatly put everybody into a little box and say, "This is the way everybody has to go," That would be just fundamentally wrong, so we don't even think of our mission in those terms. But you can see, when you begin to think of the large picture, how difficult it is to define our program.

John E. Fetzer August 29, 1986 interview.

7. John Fetzer didn't require anyone to follow his spiritual path. While this gives successors freedom to choose their own path, it doesn't mean that they can ignore John Fetzer's vision. Some feel that John's path was separate from his vision. I believe that

John's vision included inquiry, interconnection of science and spirituality and transformation. Transformation in the sense of a permanent shift in perception towards higher levels of consciousness starts with the individual, and spreads to communities. Absent these characteristics, the vision could become diluted.

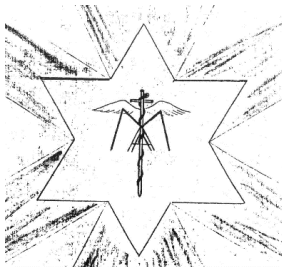
8. A basic understanding of the founder's writings and life are important for understanding his purpose and vision. Numerous times, he shared that he had twice before incarnated to generate an endowment to fund initiatives to fulfill Spirit's call. He also shared that in each case, that endowment went off track. This was his last attempt, that he wasn't reincarnating to set up another endowment. His instruction was "don't screw it up". Is there an implied spiritual karma and responsibility for future leaders?

On his deathbed at age 17,  
I made a promise to the higher order that if I succeeded in living, that I  
would do something significant in behalf of the Spirit before I died.  
John E. Fetzer, Interview with Ken Pelletier winter 88 at Tucson ranch

#### IV QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE REFLECTION

John E. Fetzer was a dynamic, forward looking leader who would invite others to advance their personal spiritual growth. He promoted a culture of mutual support and collective spiritual development as well. For this reason, John Fetzer would have used a historical document only as a point of departure, and not as an anchor to restrain growth. Perhaps a few questions could be offered to invite future exploration.

- 1) What is the universal wisdom about the founder's vision and Spirit, that transcends individual faith systems?
- 2) Is the mystical nature of the founding vision clear? In what ways?
- 3) What is your individual responsibility in response to the Guiding Purpose and mission?
- 4) What is the collective group's responsibility in response to the Guiding Purpose and mission?
- 5) What inner practices could be integrated to help individuals and groups elevate their consciousness beyond the mind and ego to connect with Spirit's calling?



The emblem of Archangel Michael was used for the original logo of the John E. Fetzer Institute.